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COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

MARVIN J. SOUTHARD, D.S.W.  
Director

SUSAN KERR  
Chief Deputy Director

RODERICK SHANER, M.D.  
Medical Director



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DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

<http://dmh.lacounty.info>

550 SOUTH VERMONT AVENUE, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90020

Reply To: (213) 738-4601  
Fax: (213) 386-1297

December 7, 2005

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W.  
Director of Mental Health

Margaret A. York  
Chief, Office of Public Safety

SUBJECT: **POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND TRAINING TO ENSURE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE PROVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

On November 8, 2005, following a recent incident involving a Department of Mental Health (DMH) client, your Board instructed DMH and Office of Public Safety (OPS) to develop joint policies and procedures to ensure a safe environment for the provision of mental health services in DMH facilities where OPS maintains a presence. The Departments were further instructed to develop a training module to be required for all OPS officers, including techniques in non-violent crisis intervention and management of assaultive behavior. The Departments were instructed to report back to your Board within thirty (30) days on the progress of the collaborative plan.

In accordance with the Board's instruction, DMH and OPS have been meeting to develop policies and procedures that clarify the responsibilities of staff of each Department to ensure the safety of clients, staff and officers at DMH facilities. These developing guidelines will specifically outline the responsibilities of staff and officers and clarify the transition of responsibility when management of a client's behavior becomes a law enforcement issue and safety becomes the responsibility of OPS or other law enforcement officers. The procedures being drafted are modeled on those currently utilized by OPS and DHS in DHS' inpatient and Psychiatric Emergency Services.

Additionally, DMH is developing a training module, based on a proposal for the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), which is envisioned to be taken by OPS officers electronically. The training will encompass techniques to effectively manage escalation of agitated clients and assaultive behavior using non-violent crisis intervention and management of assaultive behavior whenever possible. This training approach would minimize the need for OPS officers to spend time away from their primary duty stations.

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Concurrently, the Board motion instructed the Director of Health Services to review and recommend training for the Sheriff's Department personnel working within the mental health ward at Twin Towers. In consultation with the Department of Health Services, and with your approval, DMH will also develop training for the Sheriff's Department personnel working with mental health clients at Twin Towers.

It is expected that finalization of the above referenced policies and procedures and development of the training modules will require sixty (60) days. However, DMH and OPS have worked collaboratively to modify and clarify, on an interim basis, policies and procedures to ensure consistency with policies used by OPS in both DMH and DHS mental health facilities. Specifically these procedures outline the responsibility of each Department's staff in situations where both DMH and OPS are needed to maximize safety.

We will keep you informed of our progress.

MJS:MAY:JA:kd

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer  
Raymond G. Fortner, Jr., County Counsel  
Leroy D. Baca, Sheriff  
Michael J. Henry, Director of Personnel  
Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D., Director and Chief Medical Officer, Department of  
Health Services  
Health Deputies



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Director of Mental Health

Margaret A. York  
Chief, Office of Public Safety

SUBJECT: **POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND TRAINING TO ENSURE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE PROVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

On November 8, 2005, following an incident involving a Department of Mental Health (DMH) client, your Board instructed DMH and Office of Public Safety (OPS) to develop joint policies and procedures to ensure a safe environment for the provision of mental health services in DMH facilities where OPS maintains a presence.

In accordance with the Board's instruction, DMH and OPS representatives at Augustus F. Hawkins are finalizing policies and procedures that clarify the responsibilities of staff of each Department to ensure the safety of clients, staff and officers at that DMH facility. It is anticipated that the policies and procedures developed at Augustus F. Hawkins will serve as a model for all DMH facilities. Specifically outlining responsibilities of staff and officers at that setting will clarify the transition of responsibility when management of a client's behavior becomes a law enforcement issue and safety becomes the responsibility of OPS or other law enforcement officers.

The Departments were further instructed to develop a training plan to be required of all OPS officers working in mental health facilities, including techniques in non-violent crisis intervention and the management of assaultive behavior. Representatives from DMH, OPS, and Sheriff have been meeting to develop a training plan that will combine an initial classroom session to be followed by eLearning modules based on the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) electronic interactive mental health training module. The training will encompass techniques to effectively manage escalation of agitated clients and assaultive behavior using Professional Assault Response Training (PART). This training approach would minimize the need for OPS officers to spend time away from their primary duty stations and can be completed in small incremented units.

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Each Supervisor  
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It is anticipated that the curriculum and associated training modules will be initiated by July 1, 2006. We will submit a status report in sixty days to inform you of the progress on this important project.

MJS:MAY:JA:kd

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer  
Raymond G. Fortner, Jr., County Counsel  
Leroy D. Baca, Sheriff  
Michael J. Henry, Director of Personnel  
Health Deputies

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